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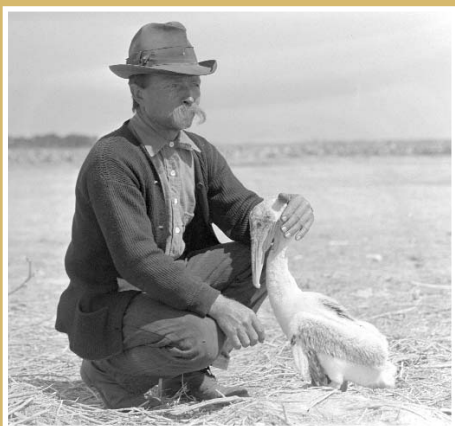


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**Rocky Mountain Arsenal Community
Information Line 303.289.0136**

Urban Wildlife Refuge Doubles In Size



our Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge is doubling in size, as more than 7,200 acres are added this fall.

The expansion results from the successful environmental clean-up work done by the U.S. Army and Shell Oil Co. at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. Federal, state and local regulatory agencies are monitoring the clean-up work at the site, and they agreed that another 7,200 acres were ready to be removed from the Environmental Protection Agency's National Priorities List, also called Superfund.

Known as the internal parcel, this acreage will be the second piece of land at the Arsenal to join the National Wildlife Refuge System. As Congress mandated in the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Act, once land is removed from the Superfund list, it's transferred from the Army to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to become part of the refuge. The first 5,000 acres from the southern portion of the site were transferred to the refuge system in 2004.

The refuge now includes more than 12,000 acres of rolling prairie, woodlands and lakes. The land offers sanctuary to more than 330 species of animals, including bald eagles, burrowing owls, deer and coyotes. Once the clean up is complete in 2011, the refuge will be more than 15,000 acres.

The Service will celebrate this milestone during National Wildlife Refuge Week with an event on Oct. 14. Scheduled from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., this free event will include hayrides, wildlife viewing tours and a guided bike ride. Throughout the afternoon and evening, visitors will be able to see live birds of prey, borrow a fishing pole for free catch-and-release fishing, create a birdhouse ornament and stroll along the more than eight miles of hiking trails. The festivities will conclude with songs, games and a surprise special guest around the refuge campfire. For more information or to make a reservation, call 303.289.0930. ■



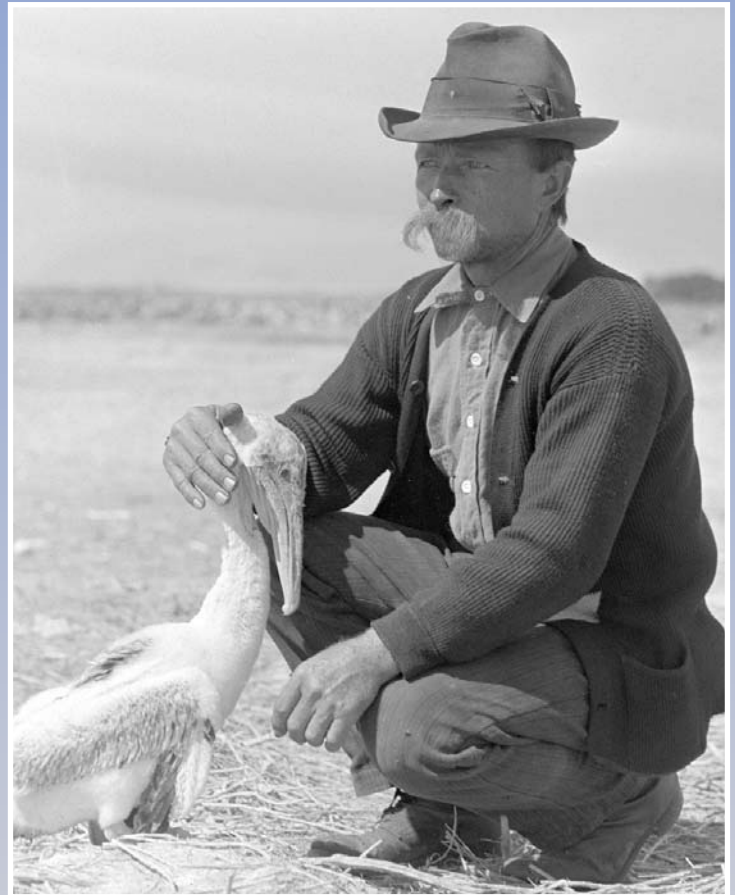
Photo: Rich Keen/DPRA Inc.

What Is A National Wildlife Refuge?

Some people think that a national wildlife refuge is just like a national park. Although they share some similarities, wildlife comes first at a national wildlife refuge. With more than 540 refuges spanning coast to coast and protecting 95 million acres of land, the National Wildlife Refuge System is the world's largest and most diverse system of lands dedicated to wildlife conservation.

The National Wildlife Refuge System's story begins with two great visionaries – President Theodore Roosevelt and German immigrant Paul Kroegel. To save a vital breeding ground for brown pelicans and to stop the hunting of birds nearly to the point of extinction for their feathers, Kroegel encouraged prominent people to help protect an island along the eastern edge of Florida. On March 14, 1903, President Roosevelt made history by designating Pelican Island as a bird sanctuary and created what has become the National Wildlife Refuge System. Kroegel was appointed as the first “refuge warden.”

Protecting birds and providing sanctuary for numerous other species continues today at refuges across the country, including the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. Officially established in 2004, it's one of America's largest urban wildlife refuges, conserves important wildlife habitat, and provides the public with education and wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities in metropolitan Denver. ■



Paul Kroegel, first refuge warden

Photo: Property of USFWS

How Does Arsenal Land Join The Refuge System?

The discovery of our nation's symbol shaped the Arsenal's future as a national wildlife refuge. In the mid 1980s, bald eagles – an endangered species – were discovered roosting over the winter months at the Arsenal.

This discovery, as well as the site's other diverse wildlife and rich habitat, prompted Congress to pass the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Act in 1992. The act stated that Arsenal land would be managed as if it were a refuge until the environmental clean up is complete in 2011. At that point, most of the land will join the National Wildlife Refuge System.

As Arsenal clean-up projects are completed and certified by the Environmental Protection Agency, with concurrence

from the State of Colorado, the land becomes eligible for removal from the EPA's National Priorities List, also known as Superfund. To remove land from the list, the Army first submits documentation to the EPA and state showing that all required clean-up actions are complete. If the regulatory agencies concur, the EPA publishes a Notice of Intent to Delete in the Federal Register and local newspapers, announcing the proposal and the public comment period dates. The EPA carefully considers and responds to all comments before making a final decision.

If the EPA decides to move forward with removing land from the Superfund list, it publishes a Notice of Deletion in the Federal Register and in local newspapers. Once the land is off the list, the Army transfers it to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for inclusion into its National Wildlife Refuge System, as stated in the Refuge Act. ■





What Clean-Up Projects Were Completed?



he Arsenal's program focuses on cleaning up soil, groundwater and structural contamination from past manufacturing and disposal activities.

On the refuge's newly acquired land, the Army and Shell completed the following clean-up projects:

- Excavated 12 contaminated soil projects and placed the soil into the Arsenal's landfill or Basin A Consolidation Area, depending upon the level of contamination
- Closed 27 wells that had the potential to cause cross-contamination from the contaminated shallow aquifer to the deep aquifer
- Demolished 162 structures that had a history of contamination or are no longer needed at the site. Building debris was taken to the Arsenal's landfill or Basin A, depending upon the level of contamination.
- Closed the Irondale Groundwater Treatment System after meeting shut-off criteria

The Environmental Protection Agency and State of Colorado certified the successful completion of these projects. ■

What Refuge Opportunities Are Available?

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ver the past decade, more than 400,000 people have visited the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, enjoying environmental education and interpretive programs for all ages, wildlife viewing tours, hiking the eight mile trail



Photo: Rich Keen/DRPA Inc.

system, catch-and-release fishing, wildlife photography and numerous other special programs.

Other opportunities include catching a glimpse of what the site was like a century ago. The visitor center showcases historical photographs and artifacts found at the site. Oral histories of families who once called this land home breathe life into these exhibits. Near the visitor center, an old farmhouse stands as a reminder of the site's diverse history and the sacrifices families made by giving up their homes and land to make way for the Rocky Mountain Arsenal in support of World War II.

Volunteering is another great way to experience the refuge. Leading public wildlife viewing tours, staffing the visitor center and assisting with habitat restoration projects are just some of the exciting volunteer opportunities at the refuge. Because of its more than 50 dedicated volunteers, the refuge is able to offer the public such exceptional programs and activities.

The refuge is an amazing resource to the public that offers visitors the chance to learn about and observe wildlife in its natural habitat. All of the programs are free, with the exception of a \$3 daily fishing fee. To visit the site, use the south entrance at 56th Avenue and Havana Street. The refuge is open Saturdays and Sundays from 6 a.m. - 4 p.m., or the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month from 6 a.m. - 7 p.m. For further information call 303.289.0930 or visit www.fws.gov/rockymountainarsenal. ■

Will The Site Always Remain A Refuge?

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he answer to this commonly asked question is, yes. Once land joins the National Wildlife Refuge System, it's under federal ownership and remains a national wildlife refuge, just like the many hundreds of refuges across the country. Refuge land cannot be purchased for development, and no thoroughfares will be built on the site. A fence will remain around the perimeter for wildlife safety and to prevent wildlife from crossing public roads.

Currently, the public can enter the refuge at 56th Avenue and Havana Street. In the future, a new visitor center will be built adjacent to the Prairie Gateway development and serve as the new entrance into the refuge. The current plans are to build the center in a

refurbished Army warehouse that was constructed in the 1940s. With its unique brick façade, solid wood interior beams and large space, it was a natural choice for a visitor center and a unique reminder of the Arsenal's history. Planning for the new visitor center is in the early phases, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service hopes to have the facility open in 2010.

The current vision for the center includes a larger exhibit room, auditorium, environmental education opportunities, conservation career center, meeting rooms and larger bookstore and gift shop. The refuge will continue to offer wildlife viewing tours, nature programs, catch-and-release fishing and special events, and additional hiking trails will connect from the visitor center. ■